

WINTER MOUNTAIN NOTES FROM SOUTHERN ARIZONA.

BY W. E. D. SCOTT.

THE following record was made during a four days' visit to the highest point of Los Sierras de Santa Catalina, Pima County, Arizona, the time being from November 26 to 29, inclusive, 1884. The region is a dense pine and spruce forest, with here and there a sprinkling of poplars and sycamores, and a few evergreen oaks. The readers of 'The Auk' would doubtless have a more definite idea of the exact point, could they have looked down with me on Fort Lowell, which seemed a fairy encampment directly below the solitary hut where I bivouacked. It was real winter at this altitude—a little over 10,000 feet—with from two to six inches of snow on the ground, and ice in the brooks where the current was not too rapid; and the region presented a very marked contrast to that about Fort Lowell, and just the other side of Tucson, where the cottonwood trees waved in plain view as green as in June. The four days were of such clear sunshine and blue sky as to make one forget the winter on the ground, and only at night was the cold intense. Bird life was not represented by very many species, but the individual representation of some kept the woods a very lively solitude.

By far the greater number of birds were Nuthatches, and the Slender-billed Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*) was ubiquitous, though now and then fairly overshadowed by numerous companies of the Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*). Once I heard a very familiar Titmouse note but did not see the maker; and this was the only hint of a Tit noticed during my visit.

Associated with flocks of the Mexican Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), which was, by the way, the only kind of Bluebird observed, was always to be found one and sometimes two representatives of the Olive Warbler (*Peucedramus olivaceus*). The Bluebirds were generally feeding on some insects in the tall pines, in flocks of from six to ten individuals. The Olive Warblers were on the best of terms with their blue friends, and as the Bluebirds were shy and restless they made it difficult to obtain or observe

very closely their smaller allies. I did not in these pine woods see the two species apart, and became at length so well aware of the intimacy that existed between them, that I would fire at any small bird passing high overhead in company with Bluebirds. They were chance shots, certainly, but the only two small birds obtained flying in this way with the Bluebirds were Olive Warblers. Presently I learned, too, that the Warblers had a call-note so like that of their associates as to be almost identical. It seemed to me only a clearer whistle of more silvery tone. During my stay I obtained six representatives of the Warbler—two adult males, two adult females, and two females of the year. Five of these birds were taken on November 26, before the Bluebirds had become very wary, and on the 28th the other was taken, as I have described, from a party of Bluebirds flying over. As near as can be estimated I was able to secure rather less than half of the Warblers I saw, for there seemed to be not more than fourteen noted, altogether.

Generally they preferred the largest branches of the pines when they alighted, though I took one not more than three feet from the ground in a small bush. Their movements while feeding or searching for food are very deliberate, though I noticed now and again certain motions when at the extremity of a bough that reminded me of a Kinglet or Titmouse. No song was noted save the call described. I think there can be little if any doubt that they are residents all the year, and certainly native residents of the pine woods of this region, for aside from the fact of their presence as recorded when winter had fairly set in, Mr. F. Stephens took a single male in February, 1880, in this same range of mountains, and at a point not very distant, though at a lower altitude, he tells me. (For further record of this individual, see Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VII. No. 3, July, 1882, p. 136.)

A number of Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*) were seen, and two adults, males, obtained, show a peculiar grayish cast about the green of the head and back that is much more apparent than in any eastern examples of this species that I have ever seen or taken.

The Fringillidæ that were observed, and which are given in the order of their comparative abundance, the most common heading the list, were Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassini*),

Junco cinereus caniceps, *Junco cinereus*, *Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*, and four individuals of the Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperophona vespertina*). Unfortunately none of these last were secured, but the identification in life of so peculiar a species, and close at hand, is not difficult. They were feeding on small cones in a spruce tree, and were not at all shy, but my gun missing fire disturbed them and I was unable to find them again. The Oregon Snowbird (*Junco oregonus*), though abundant at a lower altitude, and observed in great numbers the day I ascended the mountain, and again on returning from the trip, was not met with in the pine woods, nor were any Crossbills observed.

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri macrolopha*), and the Raven (*Corvus corax carnivorus*) were the only Corvidæ noted. Neither were common, though the former was seen every day, but the latter only twice during my stay.

The Woodpeckers were represented by five species: Harris's Woodpecker (*Picus villosus harrisi*), the Brown-headed Woodpecker (*Sphyrapicus thyroides*), the Nuchal Woodpecker (*S. varius nuchalis*), the California Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi*), and the Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes mexicanus*). The California was perhaps most common, though Harris's and the Brown-headed were nearly as abundant, and the others rare. The Brown-headed Woodpecker was represented almost entirely by females, of which I perhaps saw twenty or more, and not a quarter as many males. It is not improbable that this is about the winter habitat of the females of this species, and that most of the males winter still farther to the northward. Four species will conclude the list of birds absolutely noted at this point, though doubtless many were overlooked, or would be found during a more protracted visit. A single Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter fuscus*) was taken, and two Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo borealis*) were seen. The Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*) was not uncommon in small flocks and singly, and, judging from the tracks in the snow, Wild Turkeys were abundant, though only two females were seen, and none were taken.